

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending and under consideration in the above-identified application.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-3, 7 and 9-11 were rejected, and Claims 4-6 and 8 were objected to.

In this Amendment, Claims 1, 5 and 9 are amended, and Claim 4 is cancelled. No new matter has been introduced as a result of this Amendment.

Accordingly, Claims 1 – 3 and 5 – 11 are at issue.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims

Claims 1-3, 7 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kashima et al. (“Kashima”) (U.S. Publication No. 2002-0149558).

Claims 4-6 and 8 were objected to as being dependent on rejected base Claim 1, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of Claim 1 and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the substantive limitations of dependent Claim 4. Thus, Claim 1 is patentable over Kashima, as are dependent Claims 2, 3 and 5 – 6, for at least the same reasons.

Claim 9, which has been amended in a similar fashion to Claim 1, is also patentable over Kashima, as are dependent Claims 10 and 11, for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these claim rejections be withdrawn.

II. Conclusion

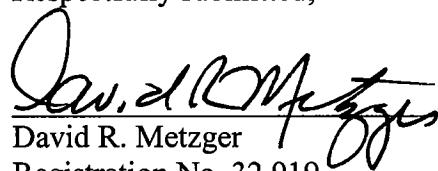
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that Claims 1 – 3 and 5 – 11 are clearly allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

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